TL345

This is a letter from an annonymous Timorese that was arrested at the time of the Santa Cruz massacre.

(...) As you know, if I am here it is because I stand up for a truth that I think you also stand up for. So I think you are not ashamed about it.

Thanks for the principles inherited from my father, who always stood up for the truth and the moral integrity, both individual and colective, I today defend here, before the court of law of the occupiers, our truth, our rights and our Dignity as people, also safeguarding the memory of our heroes and martyrs that died for that same truth.

Since the beggining I have refused to use the local lawyer and I have tried to contact, through friends, the lawyers of Jakarta who have a great juridical perception and who are also defenders of the human rights in their country and are flexible towards the situation of East Timor.

They are neutral and not easily influenced. So, although with several difficulties of various kind, the lawyers of Jakarta have managed to arrive in Dili.

I was the first to stand on trial. I was handcuffed and I felt "Proud" !

(...) The lawyers were in fact good defensors and for that they have put their phisical integrity at risk. During their stay in Dili their steps were always followed, and not so few times were they intimidated and even questioned.

The occupiers used several forms of persuasion to abort our objective of using the Jakarta lawyers. It was like this: "they" came to us and "they" told us that by using the Jakarta lawyers we would suffer more. As "they" could not frighten us with this, "they" used a new process for terrorizing us: "they" ordered us to remove our mats from the cells and in that way we slept on the grownd without having anything to cover ourselves, but the International Red Cross came and "they" gave us back our mats. "They" also used other forms like not giving us water to drink and bath.

"They" also tried to persuade the lawyers to quit by telling them that the Timorese have the bad habit of asking for everything and even more when someone helps them.

(...) How difficult it is for a Nacionalist to choose between either his Family or his Motherland. This is my situation at the moment. In truth, I think that I have sacrificed the well being and the future of my sons. But I do not regret it.

(...) In prision I have tried to educate myself more. First I will strenghten my English for I see that the English language is the key that will help me to open many doors, which will lead me into different corridors in life.

Here, in this small corner, in the candlelight, I am writing. Many and great hopes that fortify our spirit, come to us.

As to us, whatever "their" sentence shall be, we shall not accept it and we shall appeal to the Superior Courts. Although "they" have given us two choices:

1st - Agree with the given sentence, that is, plead guilty and then ask for "gracia" or amnesty to the president

2nd - Disagree with the sentence and appeal do the Superior Courts.

The first choice is undoubtedly a political attitude. What "they" want is for us to plead guilty so that "they" can justify "their" interest before the world, showing that the demonstrators had arms (guns) and provoked and that the army opened fire only to protect itself.

The judges as well as the public prosecutors tried to talk us to quit the idea of appealing to the Superior Court, and to accept the frist choice. We have refused because we respect the memory of our martyrs that died in Santa Cruz, and we have decided to sacrifice ourselves (...)

(...) In our defense at the Court of Law, we managed to elaborate the History of East Timor which will serve for our youth to be aware and to see the true face of the process of integration.

The people of our nation have acclaimed with a great applause our contribution for the common well being.

The strings are still among us with "our Family" as well as with our "foreign Brothers".